



ANNUAL REPORT

For Year Ended June 30, 1966

Recording for the Blind, Inc.



ANNUAL REPORT  
JULY 1, 1965-JUNE 30, 1966

Recording for the Blind, Inc.  
215 EAST 58TH STREET  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022  
212-751-0860



On May 12, 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson presented the Recording for the Blind Scholastic Achievement Awards to three outstanding blind college graduates. With the President, from left to right, are: Ronald Denis, graduate of Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts; Karen Gearreald, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia; and Barbara Bowman, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. The \$500 awards were presented at the White House.

# *Pathway to the Mind*

## *The Annual Report of the President to the Board of Directors for the Fiscal Year, July 1, 1965 - June 30, 1966*

The progress of Recording for the Blind, Inc. during fiscal year July 1, 1965-June 30, 1966<sup>1</sup> should be a cause of satisfaction to the members of the Board of Directors and to all others who share a faith in the capacity of visually handicapped people to free themselves from dependency and frustration.

The twelve months covered by this report have been the most productive in the fifteen years' existence of Recording for the Blind. The period was marked by a substantial increase in the number of recipients of our educational service and by important steps to expand our program.

During the year, RFB provided free recorded educational material to more than 4,000 blind borrowers. These included 1,598 elementary and high school students; 1,892 college and graduate students (of an estimated 2,000 now attending colleges and universities), and 850 adults engaged in business and the professions.<sup>2</sup>

Over 2,700 volunteers in 16 RFB Units throughout the country, and a staff of 75 produced, at the request of the blind we serve, 2,181 new titles (representing 12,140 copies and 300,299 discs), an increase of 24.9%. From our Library, which now contains over 11,000 titles in 65,000 copies, we circulated, free on loan, 22,398 recorded textbooks and other educational material, an increase of 5.4%. In the year ahead we anticipate an increase of at least 10% in the production of new titles.

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<sup>1</sup>In March, 1965, the Board of Directors authorized a change of procedure from a calendar year to a fiscal year basis.

<sup>2</sup>Included in these figures are borrowers served individually as well as those served through 279 schools and agencies for the blind.

## *Expansion Goals*

During the last three years we have been primarily concerned with planning an orderly expansion of our service not only to meet the growing needs of college and adult students, but to serve the blind grade school population more nearly adequately than has been possible in the past.

The on-coming challenge to our capacity and commitment is measurable by the size of the blind population who are current and potential users of our service. It is expected, for example, that the estimated 2,000 blind students now in college and graduate schools will multiply to 4,000 by the early 1970's. There are slightly more than 18,000 blind children in the elementary and high school grades, exclusive of those in certain private and parochial schools. It can be foreseen that the number of adults in need of recorded educational material will continue to grow as more qualified blind advance in higher education and progress into responsible positions in business and the professions. Furthermore, new definitions of visual disability which have been incorporated in recent federal legislation open the way to our serving a still undetermined number of other handicapped who cannot read by themselves for reasons other than blindness. Obviously, careful planning has been and continues to be essential to our meeting future increases in the demand for our service.

### *RFB's Expansion Program*

To attain the goals of adequate expansion, three major objectives were established, of which two have been realized and the third will be in process in the coming fiscal year. These were: (1) adequate physical facilities; (2) more efficient and faster service to our borrowers; (3) the adaptation of our service to tape, as well as disc, production.

The first objective was attained in late 1964 and formalized in January 1965 when we inaugurated our own six-story building, and the progress in this last fiscal year is in large part testimony to the importance of this new facility to our program.

The second objective commanded a large share of our energies and attention during the last twelve months when we have subjected our techniques and system of producing and distributing books to careful examination and analysis. Changes and improvements were introduced in relating Unit levels of reading to production capacity at Headquarters; book assignments to Units for reading were reorganized; and clerical procedures at Headquarters were modernized and made more effective. These have brought about a general improvement in our service, especially to our blind students who must always meet classroom deadlines successfully if they are to keep pace with other students.

The third objective—the conversion to tape—is the major project of RFB for the coming fiscal year. It was approved by the Board of Directors at a Special Meeting last May and is now in the beginning phase of realization.

### *Background of the Tape Project*

When we began our service fifteen years ago, it was tailored to fit the individual needs of a small group of blind war veterans who needed recorded textbooks and other educational material in order to return to college to complete their education. We had very little in the way of financial support, no staff and a small group of volunteers who recorded single copies of books requested by blind individuals on Soundscriber discs. A few years later, a system was devised by which two copies could be recorded simultaneously by hooking up a microphone to two Soundscribers, and we made our first technological advance. As we became better known, our program attracted more users, volunteers and contributors, and it was necessary to adopt a new technology to provide more copies of a greater number of books to a larger number of borrowers. The number of copies needed, however, was always too few to justify the expense of a commercially pressed record which is only possible economically when produced in great quantities. Our problem was to produce a few copies at a low cost.

Accordingly, in 1956 we developed a new system of producing recorded books on 7" lightweight, plastic discs in multiple copies, through a process called "embossing," which are playable on the Talking Book Machine provided free by the Government to the blind or on a 16 $\frac{2}{3}$  speed, manually operated phonograph. The number of copies to be made was estimated as accurately as possible with an average of six; one copy was sent to the blind borrower who made the original request, and the remaining copies were placed in our circulating library for the use of other borrowers. The tape, on which the book was originally recorded, was then erased and re-used many times in recording other books. This system resulted in the most economical and best method then known of increasing our production substantially and hence our service to the blind. The ten years since 1956, when we had about 1,000 titles in multi-copies available in our Library of which we circulated roughly 2,300 copies to about 700 borrowers, have shown a growth trend of satisfying proportions in the number of blind we have been able to serve and the number of books produced and circulated.

As excellent a record as this is, the system we have been using successfully during this first phase of our development is not adequate for the future expansion of our service. Only the conversion to tape will provide the flexibility we need to meet the mounting demand for books on tape created by the widespread availability of inexpensive, portable tape recorders and their use by the blind at all age and grade levels. A survey we conducted of 6,000 active and inactive RFB borrowers to determine the distribution among them of tape recorders and their preference for tapes or discs resulted in 2,296 responses. Of these, 80% owned or had regular access to tape recorders, and 60% indicated a preference for tape, as against 40% for discs. The evidence of the survey was confirmed by supplementary research, some of which was done in conjunction with the Library of Congress, agencies for the blind in the 50 States and other federal agencies serving the blind. Overall, it was strongly indicated that the success of RFB's current program and its expansion in the future required the adoption of tape as speedily as possible.





Of the 2,296 borrowers queried, 60% indicated a preference for tape, as against 40% for discs.

## *Expansion Into Tape Production*

Beginning in the fall of this year a Master Tape Library will be established at Headquarters for a two-fold purpose: first, to provide books on tape as well as on discs, according to individual preference; and, second, to form the nucleus of what we hope will develop, with the cooperation of other agencies, into a National Central Master Tape Repository of all free, recorded educational material available in the United States to all handicapped, who because of blindness or for some other reason, cannot read printed texts.

Master tapes of all books recorded by RFB will be stocked, and copies will be made on request, either on tape or discs, and sent free on loan to our borrowers during an estimated three-year transition period after which the demand for discs should diminish to a point where we shall supply tape copies only. During this transition period books on discs already recorded will continue to be circulated until they are worn out or have outlived their usefulness, at which time they will be eliminated from our Library.

The Master Tape Library Project will necessitate raising a Special Project budget of \$340,000 over and above our regular operating budget, which for the coming fiscal year is \$531,000. We are confident, however, that the importance of this program will attract a sufficient number of individual, business and foundation contributors to assure the success of this vitally important undertaking.

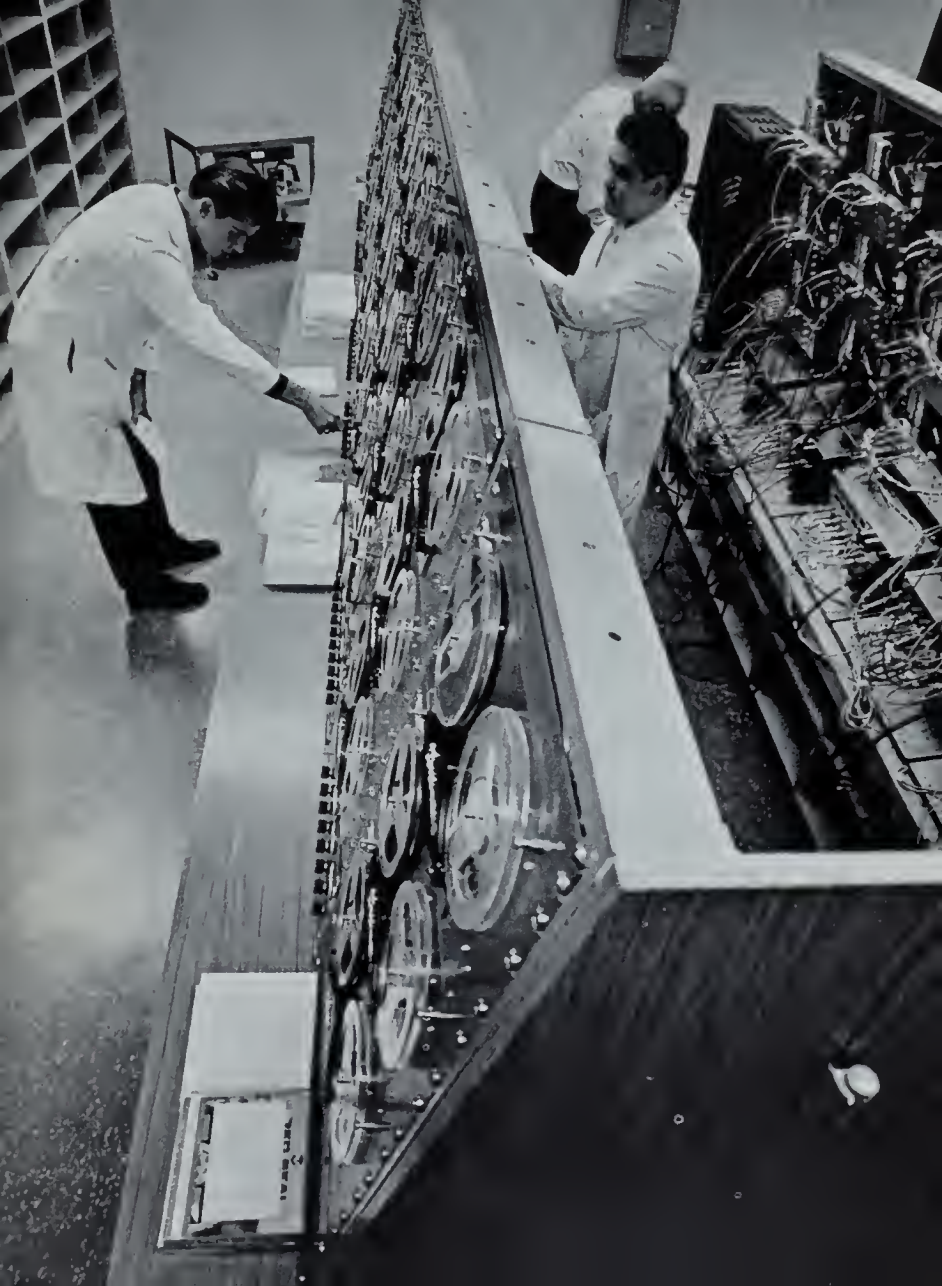
## *Unit Progress*

Parallel with the expansion of our services during the past year have been the inevitable enlargement of several of our Units and expansion in operations at Headquarters. Our Athens Unit is preparing to move in the spring into a new building to be con-

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From a high school student in Washington:

"I maintained a 4.0 grade average during all four years of high school and I know this was in part due to your help."



structed for their use by the University of Georgia on campus property with funds generously provided by the Callaway Foundation. The Berkshire County Unit in Lenox, Massachusetts, opened a Williamstown branch with two recording booths. The Chicago Unit will open a branch on the University of Chicago campus this fall and will have booths for highly specialized reading. The Arizona Unit is contemplating moving its Phoenix studio to larger quarters and will also open a branch Unit on the Arizona State College campus. The Pomona Valley Unit anticipates expanding its quarters by next summer. Units in Denver, Miami, Oak Ridge and Princeton have all made extensive renovations to enlarge or improve their studio facilities. Headquarters has added three new recording booths, one of which is a music booth equipped with a piano, the generous gift of a member of our Board.

At Headquarters, the sixth floor has been completed for the Circulating Library and the second floor has been prepared to house the Master Tape Library and tape-duplicating equipment. A noteworthy improvement in disc production at Headquarters has been made possible through the generosity of the E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation, to convert our embossing equipment to produce an average of three copies per book rather than the six copies produced in the past. This will permit an output of more titles rather than more copies, although additional copies, if needed, can be made from the master tapes stored in the Master Tape Library.

Liaison between the Units and Headquarters has been further solidified during the year. Two successful meetings were held in New York: in October, the Annual Conference of Unit Chair-

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From a college student in New York:

"Recording for the Blind is the most valuable tool a blind college student has outside of his hard-working mind. Please spell this out in ten foot high letters on a sign somewhere so that the seeing public will get the message."

men and in January, the first Unit Studio Directors Workshop. These two meetings will be held simultaneously in the future beginning this October. Our National Director has also visited every Unit to become more familiar with Unit facilities, personnel and problems. The substantial increase in demand we anticipate with the introduction of our tape service will result in new calls upon our Units to recruit additional qualified volunteers to sustain our growing program.

### *Special Reading Projects*

Each year RFB experiences certain "valley periods" of reading when we are not pressed to meet classroom deadlines for our students. To maintain our operations at a relatively even level, increasingly we have taken on special projects during such periods. In the past year we recorded textbooks on tape for various States which maintain master tape libraries from which they supply copies to blind students on demand. We also undertook two reading projects for the Library of Congress. In the one case, we recorded on tape 292 books, and in the other a group of magazines which included *Personnel & Guidance Journal*, *Horizon*, *Musical Quarterly*, *QST* and *Current*. Tape was supplied for these projects by the organizations involved.

### *"The News of the Week in Review"*

For over six years, we recorded part of "The News of the Week in Review," the excellent news summary published in the Sunday edition of The New York Times. Regretfully, we had to bring this project to a close as of June 26, 1966 for reasons of economy. The small subscription charge we made for this service produced an income inadequate to meet the annual cost of \$25,000, and in view of the priorities of our expanded operations and the Master Tape Library and tape service, it was thought prudent to suspend The Times project. We are in touch with other organizations in the hope that one will decide to re-activate this worthwhile service, using the experienced RFB readers who worked on it in the past.

## *Raised Line Drawings*

The production of raised line drawings, as supplemental aids to recorded textbooks, reached an all-time high in the period covered by this report. Raised line supplements were completed for 76 recorded titles (total copies: 471), representing 4,379 metal foil master drawings duplicated on a total of 28,632 Brailon plastic sheets. Currently in production are 10 additional titles in 60 copies.

The period of the report has also marked the end of the two-year research project in raised line drawings conducted by us under a grant from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration. In the course of the project, evaluation was made of diagrams for books in the following areas: Astronomy, Biological Sciences, Economics, History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Logic, Physics, Engineering, Psychology and the Industrial Arts.

Nine new tools have been designed, tested and perfected; these tools produce raised lines which have been found fully discriminable from each other. One of the tools was developed under a totally new concept of directional representation. It replaces the visual arrow sign with a "tactile arrow," which feels smooth when scanned in the proper direction, and rough in the opposite.

A manual of instruction is now being prepared which will incorporate the findings of the research project as they pertain to the details of production of raised line drawings. It is hoped that the manufacture of the new tools will be made possible through another grant, so that they may be available at a reasonable cost to all groups, within and outside RFB.

Since undertaking to make the first raised line drawings for their recorded textbooks in the school year 1962/63, RFB Units have completed such supplements for a total of 124 titles (828 recorded copies); these supplements required the production of 7,504 master drawings, which were duplicated onto 50,088 plastic sheets. The supplements are bound in one or several volumes to accompany each copy of the recorded book, and are circulated with the recorded textbooks in the regular RFB program.





## *Achievement Awards*

As in other years, the Annual Scholastic Achievement Awards of \$500 each, made possible through the generosity of a Board member, were presented in May at the White House to three extraordinary blind students. President Johnson said to them, "You have helped to bring the light of inspiration into what we might call the darkness of despair. I am pleased to observe that you are symbols of determination, and it is a great honor for me to give you these awards this morning which really reflect the admiration, the applause, and I might say the affection of not only your President, but of your country."

The 1966 award-winning college graduates, all members of Phi Beta Kappa, were:

Barbara Ann Bowman, 21, of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, graduated with a BA degree from Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. Miss Bowman, an English major, was in the top 10% of her class, won freshmen, sophomore and junior honors and Honorable Mention in the 1966 Woodrow Wilson Fellowship competition.

Ronald Albert Denis, 22, of Salem, Massachusetts, graduated with a BA degree from Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. Mr. Denis, a psychology major, was on the Dean's List for seven consecutive semesters and won sophomore honors in 1964. He graduated with honors in psychology.

Karen Louise Gearreald, 22, of Norfolk, Virginia, graduated first in her class, with a BA degree from Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia. Miss Gearreald, an English major, was a Stukes Scholar from 1962-1965, maintained a straight A average and was a member of several honor societies.

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From the Director of the Home-bound Program of a Board of Education in West Virginia:

"The recording of his books helped .....  
so much in his work that he is now a straight A student. He will be  
entering high school this fall."



As we look back on the progress of the last eighteen months and ahead to the greater opportunities for service, on behalf of the Board of Directors, and for myself personally, I should like to express my appreciation to the 35,000 individual donors, whose generous contributions account for two-thirds of our operating budget, and to the many foundations and businesses from whom the remaining third is derived, to our 2,700 loyal and able volunteers, and to our dedicated staff of 75 people at the Units and Headquarters. A special note of appreciation must also be sounded for the members of our National Advisory Committee and all 15 Unit Chairmen who give of themselves with unselfish loyalty. Much has to be done in the new complexities of education to make it possible for the blind and other visually disabled to keep pace with their more fortunate compatriots. I am confident that our joint efforts, as they have in the past, will be of immeasurable help to them in the future.

ALLEN H. MERRILL,  
*President*

September 1966

# EXHIBIT I

## RECORDING FOR THE BLIND, INC. NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

*Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Fund Balances  
Resulting from Cash Transactions  
At June 30, 1966*

### ASSETS

National Headquarters:—

General Fund:

Cash .....	\$ 33,204.45
Due from Recording Units .....	2,774.90
Equipment for Recording Units .....	564.10
Advances to employees .....	232.00

\$ 36,775.45

Special Projects Fund:

Cash .....	12,519.31
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Operating Reserve Fund:

Cash in savings accounts .....	196,065.37
Marketable securities at cost (approximate quoted market \$98,300) .....	<u>107,070.75</u>

303,136.12

Endowment Grant (restricted) Fund:

Cash in savings accounts .....	100,000.00
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Real Estate and Building Fund:

Land and building, at cost .....	<u>1,006,337.15</u>
	<u><u>1,458,768.03</u></u>

### LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES

National Headquarters:—

General Fund:

Payroll taxes withheld from employees .....	\$ 6,194.55
Fund balance .....	<u>30,580.90</u>

\$ 36,775.45

Special Projects Fund .....	12,519.31
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Operating Reserve Fund .....	303,136.12
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Endowment Grant (restricted) Fund (no change during period) .....	100,000.00
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Real Estate and Building Fund .....	<u>1,006,337.15</u>
	<u><u>1,458,768.03</u></u>

# EXHIBIT II

## RECORDING FOR THE BLIND, INC. NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

*Statement of Income Collected and Expenses  
Disbursed and Changes in Fund Balances  
For the Year Ended June 30, 1966*

### National Headquarters

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Special Projects Fund</u>	<u>Operating Reserve Fund</u>
Income collected:			
Contributions and legacies ..	\$496,138.54	\$58,940.64	\$ 21,017.72
Special events less related expenses of \$1,300 .....	6,745.21		
New York Times recordings .....		3,167.99	
Investment income .....			16,301.66
Miscellaneous .....	1,119.20		
Total income collected	<u>504,002.95</u>	<u>62,108.63</u>	<u>37,319.38</u>
Expenses disbursed:			
Production .....	136,890.96		
Tape recording .....	31,936.71		
Central library .....	58,575.59		
Unit coordination .....	41,855.07		
Special projects .....		72,089.46	
Administration .....	102,184.82		
Public information .....	27,524.69		
Fund raising .....	98,290.07		
Total expenses disbursed	<u>497,257.91</u>	<u>72,089.46</u>	
Excess of income collected over expenses disbursed .....	6,745.04	(9,980.83)	37,319.38
Net gain on sale of securities ..			8,560.76
Fund balance at July 1, 1965	25,960.84	10,500.14	265,131.00
Interfund transfers .....	(2,124.98)	12,000.00	(7,875.02)
Fund balance at June 30, 1966	<u>\$ 30,580.90</u>	<u>\$12,519.31</u>	<u>\$303,136.12</u>

60 Broad Street  
New York 10004  
September 7, 1966

To the Board of Directors of  
Recording for the Blind, Incorporated

In our opinion the accompanying Exhibits I and II present fairly the assets, liabilities and fund balances of Recording for the Blind, Incorporated National Headquarters at June 30, 1966 resulting from cash transactions, and the income collected and expenses disbursed and changes in fund balances for the year, and are presented on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year. Our examination of these statements was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. It was impracticable for us to extend our examination of contributions and legacies received beyond accounting for amounts so recorded.

PRICE WATERHOUSE & CO.

*National Headquarters*  
215 East 58th Street  
New York, New York 10022

*Recording Units*

In addition to its Headquarters tape recording studios in New York City, Recording for the Blind has Units in the following cities:

**ARIZONA**

Phoenix Public Library  
12 East McDowell  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

**ATHENS**

Georgia Center for  
Continuing Education  
University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia 30602

**BERKSHIRE COUNTY**

Lenox Library  
Lenox, Mass. 01240

**CHARLOTTESVILLE**

165 Madison Lane  
Charlottesville, Va. 22903

**CHICAGO**

600 S. Michigan Avenue  
Room 910  
Chicago, Illinois 60615

**DENVER**

305 Milwaukee Street  
Denver, Colorado 80206

**DETROIT**

Kresge Science Library  
5250 Second Boulevard  
Detroit, Michigan 48202

**LOS ANGELES**

5022 Hollywood Blvd.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90027

**LOUISVILLE-ANCHORAGE**

Masonic Home, Kentucky 40041

**MIAMI**

University of Miami  
P.O. Box 8014  
Coral Gables, Florida 33124

**NEW HAVEN**

New Haven Public Library  
133 Elm Street  
New Haven, Conn. 06510

**OAK RIDGE**

Cheyenne Hall, Room 209  
Tyrone Road  
Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37832

**PALOS-ORLAND**

La Grange Road & 143 St.  
Orland Park, Ill. 60462

**POMONA VALLEY**

McAlister Center  
912 N. Columbia Avenue  
Claremont, Calif. 91713

**PRINCETON**

100 Stockton Street  
Princeton, N. J. 08540

## OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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MISS ETHEL H. WISE

DONALD STALEY, *National Director*

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*The Twentieth Century Fund*

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*Book-of-the-Month Club*

JOHN GUNTHER  
*Author*

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH  
*Author and Educator*

FRANK ALTSCHUL, *Retired*

Recording for the Blind, Inc., has little endowment. Its greatest need is funds for the future. Although it produced 12,140 educational books between July 1, 1965-June 30, 1966, this production met only a small part of the potential demand. You can help to provide for future years by including this service in your will.

### *Form of Bequest*

I give and bequeath to Recording for the Blind, Inc., New York, New York, the sum of \$.....

Name.....

Address.....

Gifts to Recording for the Blind, Inc. are exempt from estate and income taxes.



*John Smith  
City College.  
Anywhere, USA*

**FREE  
READING MATTER  
FOR THE  
BLIND**